



# Breastfeeding Benefits

*All medical professional communities consider breastfeeding the recommended nutrition for infants and acknowledge that there is no equal artificial substitute for it. Breastfeeding carries short and long-term health benefits to the mother and baby along with benefits to the family, workplace and society at large.*



## Why breastfeed?

### Benefits for Baby

Babies fed human milk have higher intelligence scores, better immunity and fewer infections such as ear infections, diarrhea, and pneumonia. Recent studies also show a potential role of human milk in protection against long-term problems such as obesity, eczema, asthma, and diabetes.

### Benefits for Mother

‘Not breastfeeding’ has negative consequences on the mother's health. Indeed, studies have shown that effects of breastfeeding show immediately after childbirth with a lower chance of uterine bleeding, and continue postpartum with faster weight loss. Breastfeeding may influence women's health long-term with decreased risk of osteoporosis, ovarian and breast cancer.

### Benefits for Family

There are various benefits to breastfeeding from the family's perspective. Those include strong mother-infant bonding, economic benefits, lifestyle benefits and workplace benefits. While breastfeeding provides a source of ideal nutrition, formula feeding provides inferior nutrition and costs between \$99-\$350 per month. Breastfed babies enjoy better immunity, require fewer doctor visits, fewer hospitalizations and fewer medications than formula fed babies. This translates into direct savings on health care expenses. In addition, parents need less time off work to care for baby's illness episodes.

### Benefits for Workplace

More and more workplaces are starting breastfeeding support programs in view of its potential benefits to employers. In addition to lower health care costs, employers could benefit from lower rates of absenteeism for both mothers and fathers of breastfeeding infants. Employer support for breastfeeding also leads to greater employee loyalty and improved employee attraction and retention and studies show increased productivity from breastfeeding mothers. Finally, in view of the huge public health and economic benefits of breastfeeding, instituting breastfeeding support in the workplace leads to public image enhancement. Organizations starting breastfeeding support programs are viewed as socially- responsible organizations that care for the health and well being of children, mothers, families and the community at large.